

## Most Vulnerable Children to Benefit From New Case Processing Tool

Kids whose parents have abandoned them...  
Kids whose relatives have abused them...  
Kids in foster care...  
Kids up for adoption...

These are the children whose lives and problems are brought to the Judiciary in the children-in-court docket series.

Now judges and Judiciary staff have a new tool to help these children more quickly and consistently statewide. That tool is the new *Children-in-Court*

*Case Processing Manual*, a guide for the uniform processing of children's cases involving child abuse and neglect and children placed in foster care, which was published earlier this year.

Evolving out of Family Division best practices, the manual was approved by the Judicial Council in December and distributed to applicable judges and staff in January 2002.

"We believe that the manual is a milestone in New Jersey's continuing program to protect the rights

Continued on page 6

# Judiciary Times

Spring 2002

The newsletter of the New Jersey Judiciary



**Olympic Honor**--Tom Hambrose, Camden probation officer, carries the flame prior to the Winter Olympics. (See article on page 5)

## National Award for Marlene Oiler

Marlene Oiler, a judicial secretary for Superior Court Judge Ann Bartlett in Vicinage 13's Hunterdon County, won the 2001 Award of Excellence of NALS, the national association for legal professionals.

Her photo appears on the cover of the winter 2001-2002 edition of *@Law*, the association's quarterly publication for members of the legal services profession.

Continued on page 14

## Civil and Family Launch Statewide Visitation Programs

On the heels of a similar, successful program by the Criminal Division, the Civil and Family Divisions this year launched their first statewide visitation programs to provide technical assistance in the vicinages and to help New Jersey's courts achieve consistent levels of quality and efficiency.

A team of two judges and two staff from the Civil Division visited the Ocean Vicinage on Feb. 25. A visitation to another vicinage is scheduled to be in progress as this newsletter goes to press.

"This is a continuation of Civil best practices," said Jane Castner, assistant director of the Civil Practice Division in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). "Our goal is to provide Civil Divisions in each vicinage with any assistance and

Continued on page 8

### Inside...

**Amending Court Rules** 2

**Meet Mary M. DeLeo** 3

**Honors for Excellence** 4

**Technology Update** 5

**The People's Court** 9

**Tips for Trainers** 11

**CDs Replace Paper** 16

## Amending Court Rules: A Demanding Challenge Resulting In Continuously Improving Service to Court Customers

The two-year cycle for rule amendments again has come full circle as hundreds of judges, members of the bar and Judiciary staff put together the finishing

touches to these cornerstones of New Jersey's court system.

Eight Supreme Court rules committees meet throughout the two-year process to discuss recommendations for updating and improving the rules that will make New Jersey's courts work even better for the people we serve. The committees represent Civil Practice, Complementary Dispute Resolution, Criminal Practice, Rules of Evidence, Family Practice, Municipal Courts, Special Civil Part Practice and the Tax Court. The committees' members include judges, lawyers and court staff.

"Under our state Constitution, the Supreme Court has responsibility to create and adopt the rules governing the practice and procedure in all of the courts in the state," said Judge Richard J. Williams, Administrative Director of the Courts. "The rules provide the predictability and clarity that are essential to the effective and efficient operation of a Judiciary that is responsive to the needs of the people it serves.

"In updating the rules," he continued, "the Supreme Court relies on its rules committees to provide well reasoned, expert advice within each committee's general area of knowledge and responsibility."

In January, the rules committees submitted their reports to the Court. The reports were published in the *New Jersey Law Journal* and *New Jersey Lawyer* and posted on the Judiciary's Internet Web site accompanied by a Notice to the Bar soliciting comments. This review and comment process gives attorneys

and members of the public the opportunity to provide considered and meaningful input into the rule amendment process. In addition, the Supreme Court holds a public hearing on the committees' reports in the spring to provide a further opportunity for input.

After all of the comments have been received and analyzed, the Court at an administrative conference in June considers and acts on every amendment contained in the rules committee reports. Those new rules and rule amendments that the Court adopts are embodied in an omnibus rule amendment order that the Chief Justice signs on behalf of the Court in July. Those rule amendments, which will take effect Sept. 1, are published in July in the legal newspapers and posted on the Internet and InfoNet. They also are sent to the commercial rules publishers (West and Gann).

In addition to the usual updates, this year's omnibus rule amendment order is expected to include a larger than usual number of rule amendments relating to Special Civil best practices. (Civil best practices similarly was the source of many amendments during the previous rules cycle.)

"The process of developing the rule amendment recommendations, receiving comment and responding to feedback is a demanding, time-intensive process," said Judge Williams. "However, it is one of the most important of all Judicial activities, insuring an informed court system responsive to the needs of New Jersey citizens."

*Judiciary Times* is prepared by Constituent Relations, Publications and Video Production Services, Office of Public Affairs, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) for employees of the Judiciary and volunteers who work with the court system. The Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court is Deborah T. Poritz. The Administrative Director of the Courts is Richard J. Williams.

Please e-mail short news articles saved as Word documents, photos and/or suggestions to:

[Linda.Holt@judiciary.state.nj.us](mailto:Linda.Holt@judiciary.state.nj.us) or send disk, photos and paper copy to: Editor, *Judiciary Times*, Office of Public Affairs, PO Box 037, Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, Trenton NJ 08625-0037. Submissions are subject to editing, and not all can be published.

### Editorial Staff and Contributors

*Director of Public Affairs*

Winifred Comfort

*Editor* Linda Brown Holt

*Contributors*

Janet Bastien, Thomas G. Dibble, Sam Forlenza, Frank Hoeber, Kelly Law, Nanette Lind, James McCoy, Bill Mecca, Glenn White. Additional thanks to the other Judiciary staff who contributed articles.

Judith Irizarry, the Mercer Vicinage's EEO/AA Officer and Ombudsman, wrote the article on Mercer's customer service program in the Winter 2001-2002 edition of *Judiciary Times*.

## **“It’s Like Coming Home,” Mary M. DeLeo Reflects On New Role as Leader of Probation Services**

In 1974, two of New Jersey’s many dedicated probation officers worked separately in the northern half of the state.

One officer, Dick Talty, had a caseload in Essex and served as president of the statewide Probation Association of New Jersey (PANJ).

The other officer, Mary M. DeLeo, worked in Middlesex, putting to use her degree in psychology and her growing understanding of the probation process as she helped clients become positive members of society.

Both became, in sequence, leaders of one of the largest, most complex and most significant organizations in New Jersey’s justice system: the Division of Probation Services within the Administrative Office of the Courts.

When Talty retired last October after four years as assistant director, heading up the statewide division, the search was on for the person who could lead Probation Services through a time of challenge and changing culture into a future characterized by customer service and best practices.

Once again, the Judiciary selected a seasoned former probation officer for one its most demanding jobs. On Nov. 26, Mary M. DeLeo became the new assistant director of Probation Services.

“It’s an exciting time to be part of Probation Services again,” said DeLeo recently in her office on Jersey St. in South Trenton. “It’s inspiring to see probation officers who are passionate about their work. You can accomplish a lot in this environment and do much to improve people’s lives and keep communities safe.”

Probation Services is one of the Judiciary’s largest divisions, encompassing supervision of thousands of adult and juvenile probationers, Child Support, the Comprehensive Enforcement Program, Adult and Juvenile Intensive Supervision Programs, and Interstate Central Registry.

Calling Probation Services “the best ambassador for the Judiciary,” DeLeo is enthusiastic about overseeing the new Probation Services standards that call for focus on outcomes, the development of partnerships and more involvement by probation officers in the communities they serve.

Partnerships and community issues are nothing new for DeLeo. She can draw on her past management experience in the two divisions with which

Probation Services most often interacts: Family Practice and Criminal Practice. DeLeo served as assistant director of Family Practice for nearly four years before joining Probation Services. Previously, she served as a manager in Criminal Practice from 1989 to 1998.

DeLeo says she came back to Probation Services because of the challenge of working with the new



**Mary M. DeLeo**, assistant director of Probation Services.

standards that took effect last fall. The new procedures, developed with extensive input from “the field,” refocus the ways probation officers work. Under the new standards, probation officers can assess the needs of offenders more accurately and get results when it comes to court-ordered conditions, she said.

As probation officers spend more time in the community, Probation Services leadership will take a more proactive role. “One of my goals is to go out to the vicinages and learn about their caseloads firsthand,” DeLeo said.

The new assistant director acknowledges that this is a time of unusual opportunity and challenge for the high-profile division. At the top of her priority list are continuing to improve services and institutionalizing partnerships across the divisions as a way of doing business.

“I am thrilled to be here and look forward to working with our outstanding staff,” DeLeo said. “Together, we’re making life better for our clients and providing safeguards for the public we serve and responding to the Judiciary’s need for enforcement of court orders.”

## Child Support Conference Recognizes Judiciary Excellence in Several Categories

Several vicinages received honors at the 20th Annual New Jersey Child Support Conference in Atlantic City last year.

The Essex Vicinage won two "Best County" awards: one in the Family Division category for its Non-Dissolution Committee, and one as Best County of the Year for Probation Services.

Best Supervisor of the Year awards went to Margaret Strangeway, team leader of Passaic – Family Division; and Robert Richardson, assistant chief probation officer, of Atlantic – Probation (Child Support).

Three Morris-Sussex Vicinage employees received the Child

Support Worker of the Year award: Velritta Yee, Ila Shah and Monica Kluge. Vicki Kroger of Atlantic was honored as Probation Worker of the Year.

Other awards included (from the Division of Human Services): County of the Year (Sussex), Supervisor of the Year Joan Andux, Gloucester Human Services Worker of the Year Valerie DiBenedetto. Sheriff's Office of the Year honors went to Burlington.

The New Jersey Child Support Council, which sponsors the annual conference, makes awards in several categories based on nominations from the Department

of Human Services, the Division of Family Development and the Administrative Office of the Courts.

### Drug Court Graduates 11

by Glenn White  
Camden Senior Probation Officer  
January 2002 marked the eighth Camden Adult Drug Court commencement ceremonies with the Judge Thomas A. Brown Jr. presiding. After months of hard work and clean drug tests, 11 people successfully completed the program. During the 2001 commencement ceremonies there were 32 graduates. The total number of successful drug court graduates since inception is 173.

## Paterson Village Initiative Probation Officers Receive PANJ Officer of the Year Award

The Probation Association of New Jersey (PANJ) last fall presented the Probation Officer of the Year Award to all probation officers in the Passaic Juvenile Services section who have participated in the Paterson Village Initiative.

The Officer of the Year distinction traditionally is conferred on one individual officer who has exhibited distinguished work performance throughout the year.

The Village Initiative is a unique partnership program that brings together police, parole, probation, schools, local service providers, health care providers, community leaders, faith community representatives and Paterson residents to address collaboratively the needs of juvenile offenders.

Since its inception in 1998, this collaborative effort has produced many positive results, including teen summits, community dinner parties, career fairs, family picnics, teen awareness, field trips and school assemblies.

The Village Initiative continues to seek out events that will have a positive impact on the quality of life in the city of Paterson.

Assignment Judge Robert J. Passero and Trial Court Administrator Richard M. Centanni congratulated the Probation Division on its achievement in a letter to Vicinage Chief Probation Officer John V. Krieger.

## Essex 1st Adoption Day

by Sam Forlenza  
Essex Family Mediation Coordinator

On National Adoption Day, Saturday, Nov. 17, 2001, 45 families in Essex County adopted 59 children. The joyous event was observed for the first time in the Essex Vicinage and coincided with celebrations in 16 cities across the country. Nationally, judges, lawyers and court staff volunteered their time to finalize more than 1,500 adoptions.

Led by the Essex Assignment Judge Joseph A. Falcone, participating families went through the final adoption proceedings at the Wilentz Court Complex. The happy and festive occasion included tearful parents and smiling children along with proud family friends and relatives.



## Camden Probation Officer Carries the Olympic Flame

The Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games invited Principal Probation Officer Tom Hambrose of the Camden Vicinage to help carry the Olympic flame that journeyed throughout the country for 65 days.

Hambrose was notified in July that he had been selected from tens of thousands of people from all walks of life. Torchbearers for the Olympic Torch Relay are "a few special people who are the light of inspiration in our nation," says Mitt Romney, president and CEO of the Salt Lake Organizing Committee.

Hambrose was recommended to the committee by one of his students in the spinning (indoor cycling) class he teaches four times a week at Royal Fitness in Barrington where he has been a member since 1995.

He has been with the Camden Probation Division since 1987 where he oversees a supervision unit in the adult section and handles all warrants. He is an instructor in the statewide safety program, NOVA; a certified Oleo Rensin Capsicum (O.C., also known as mace) instructor; and teaches segments in Entry Level Probation Officer Training.

Hambrose is also a trainer for the Comprehensive Adult Probation System (CAPS) and is a National Crime Information Center (NCIC) terminal agency representative.

The torch left Atlanta, Ga., on Dec. 4 and arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Feb. 8, covering 13,500 miles. Tom proudly carried the Olympic flame through Wilmington, Del., on Saturday, Dec. 22, while more than 100 friends, family and co-workers cheered him on.

## Camden TCA Receives Honors

Yvonne LaMons, trial court administrator, Camden Vicinage, was presented with the Communication Arts 2001 Award by the United States Achievement Academy. The United States Achievement Academy Awards honor nationally the performance of outstanding achievements by students and adult leaders.

Also, in May 2001, she received the annual award of the American Sign Language/Deaf Studies and Interpreters for the Deaf Program at Union County College.

## Tech-KNOWLEDGE-y



### The Judiciary Gets Its Technology in Ship-Shape

by Janet Bastien

As the Judiciary sets sail on a new technology voyage, everyone has a role to play to keep the ship afloat and make our journey successful. At the helm of this adventure is the newly formed IT Steering Committee, which includes judges and Judiciary staff leadership from various case management areas. But we are all first mates on this great vessel, stoking the engines as we sail forward.

The itinerary for our trip is quite extensive, from new desktop software to a complete upgrade of the Wide Area Network (WAN), with major ports of call, including a new e-mail system for 8,500 users and Internet-based case management systems. Windows 2000 and Lotus Notes are moving full steam ahead; by early March, approximately 3,000 users had been converted to Lotus Notes.

ITO and local IT divisions will buoy the implementation of new technology throughout the Judiciary. They'll throw you a line if you're drowning in password or other conversion maelstroms. And the Judiciary Users Information Committee (JUICE) is on-board, providing you with information to keep you swimming in the mainstream. Be sure to visit JUICE on the Infonet.

"All of us are glad to be part of the IT effort in the Judiciary, and we are all ready to hear from court users throughout the system," Judge Joseph A. Falcone, Essex Assignment Judge and chair of

Continued on page 14

## Vulnerable Children to Benefit From Case Processing Tool

Continued from page one

of children and families,” said Judge Ellen Koblitz, Bergen Presiding Judge for the Family Division and chair of the Children-in-Court Committee of the Conference of Family Presiding Judges. “It’s a practical ‘nuts and bolts’ tool that will be very helpful to judges and staff.”

The manual provides procedural and operational guidance to Judiciary staff in the management of children-in-court cases. It helps vicinages to meet statewide standards for these cases, particularly the need to meet tight time goals to assure that children get the care they need as soon as possible.

It does this by providing a process that enables courts to assist children more efficiently, quickly and consistently throughout the state.

---

### Judiciary Expands Use of Court-Ordered Mediation

By Michelle V. Perone, Esq.  
Civil Practice Division

The Judiciary has been working to expand the use of mediation in Civil, General Equity and Probate cases. As part of the implementation of civil best practices, judges are encouraged to refer civil cases to early mediation. In fact, over the past couple of years, growing numbers of New Jersey litigants and attorneys have experienced this “new” and arguably kinder way of resolving disputes.

As part of that effort, a pilot program has been operating in Hudson, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Salem and Union counties in which 12 specific case types are almost always referred early in the litigation to mediation.

Mediation is a dispute resolution process in which an impartial third party - the mediator - facilitates negotiations among the parties to help them reach a mutually acceptable settlement. The major distinction between mediation and arbitration is that unlike arbitration, in mediation the mediator does not make a decision about the outcome of the case.

The parties, with the assistance of their attorneys, work toward a solution with which they are comfortable. The purpose of mediation is not to decide who

Highlights of the new manual include:

- ? Detailed instructions for the step-by-step management of the various children-in-court cases;
- ? Instructions for entering data uniformly into the Family Automated Case Tracking System (FACTS);
- ? An outline of the key concepts of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) that, with New Jersey’s enabling legislation, guide the children-in-court process;
- ? Information on federal requirements that must be met exactly in order for New Jersey to continue to receive funding (under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act);
- ? Clearly organized, tabbed sections for quick reference;
- ? Forms to offer new ideas and feedback.

“Our goal is continuous improvement of the process,” said Judge Koblitz.

The *Children-in-Court Case Processing Manual* follows the publication early in 2000 of the *Juvenile Delinquency Case Processing Manual* and the *Non-Dissolution Case Processing Manual*. The publication of these manuals contributed to uniformity and effectiveness in managing these important case types.

#### Significant Judge and Staff Input

The *Children-in-Court* document initially was developed by team leaders and Family Division managers most familiar with this case type. They were supported by Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) staff and with the leadership and oversight of several Family Presiding Judges under the leadership of Judge Koblitz.

“The manual is the result of the months of hard work and careful attention by the committee and other Judiciary staff,” said Judge Donald J. Volkert, Jr., chair of the Conference of Family Division Presiding Judges. “Thanks to this manual, the Judiciary should be able to manage these cases fairly, efficiently and effectively, and in compliance with federal requirements.”

Continued on page 10

## Essex Arbitration Program Recognized

by Thomas G. Dibble  
Special Assistant to the Trial Court  
Administrator - Essex Vicinage

Kenneth Sunberg, chairman of the Essex County Arbitration Committee, presented the first Outstanding Achievement Award to the vicinage's arbitration program during the mid-November Essex County Arbitrator Annual Training Session.

With the award, the Essex Bar Association has honored a program that helps lawyers, litigants and the Superior Court. The award recognizes the team effort among bench, bar and court staff to implement a statutorily mandated program to resolve civil cases expeditiously and to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

Michael Cammarota, Civil Division manager, and Crystal Page, arbitration administrator, accepted the plaque on behalf of the program.

The arbitration program runs three times each week and normally includes automobile and personal injury type cases. With the adoption of civil best practices, other case types have been included in the arbitration program. The unit now schedules book accounts, product liability, assault and battery, contract reports to the committee.

Crystal Page has worked for the vicinage since 1985 starting in the Special Civil Part. She transferred to the Civil Assignment Office and moved on to the arbitration unit in June 1997. She was named administrator in October 1998.

Crystal said of the award, "I am very proud of the hard work of my staff, and I am grateful for the support and cooperation of the Essex County Bar. The success of our program would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of the committee and the 150 or so arbitrators."

Its arbitration program is one of many activities the Essex vicinage is proud of. We also keep improving our facilities to better service clients.

If you have not had a chance to see the Complementary Dispute Resolution (CDR) center in Room 233, Hall of Records Annex, stop by the next time you are in Newark. We'd be glad to give you a tour.



**Arbitration Honors**--Essex Assignment Judge Joseph A. Falcone and Crystal Page, Essex Civil administrator, display the arbitration plaque. Looking on are Judge Eugene J. Codey Jr. (second from left), Civil Presiding Judges, and Michael Cammarota (left), Civil Division manager.

## Judiciary Annual Report Now Online

The Judiciary's 2000-2001 Annual Report is now online.

A .pdf of the Judiciary's official report can be viewed or downloaded from the InfoNet or Judiciary Internet site, [www.njcourtsonline.com](http://www.njcourtsonline.com).

The report includes summaries of Judiciary accomplishments during the previous court year, such as establishing standards and best practices, reducing backlog and expanding drug courts.

A print version of the Annual Report was made available to lawmakers, libraries and other interested parties in February. The report was produced for the Judiciary by the Office of Public Affairs in the Administrative Office of the Courts.





## Civil and Family Launch Statewide Visitation Programs

Continued from page 1

feedback they need to implement civil best practices effectively.”

In preparation for the first visit, a visitation team collected status reports from the vicinage, accumulated and analyzed data, and studied documentation about the Criminal and Family visitation programs.

A four-person team will visit each vicinage, at the rate of about one vicinage per month. Team members are: Judge William C. Todd III, Civil Presiding Judge, Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage; Judge Amy Piro Chambers, Civil Presiding Judge of the Middlesex Vicinage; Sandra Thaler-Gerber, Union’s Civil Division manager; and Assistant Director Castner.

### Start with calendar call

During a visit, the team starts the day by observing calendar call, then meets with civil judges, court staff and attorneys. Following the visit, the team meets for discussion, presents an oral report to vicinage leadership and prepares a draft report which it will send to the vicinage for review and comment.

Once vicinage feedback is received, the team prepares the final report which includes standards, observations, vicinage response (if any), and an invitation to the vicinage to provide comment about the visitation process as well as suggestions for improvement.

The final report is then sent to the Assignment Judge, with copies to the Administrative Director, appropriate AOC directors and assistant directors, the TCA, and the relevant President Judges and division managers. When the report contains recommendations for corrective action by the vicinage, Judge Richard J. Williams, Administrative Director of the Courts, requests from the Assignment Judge a follow-up report about six months after the final report has been presented.

The members of Civil Practice’s visitation team are expected to remain the same for each vicinage. Family Practice Division, on the other hand, has different teams to cover the various docket types (such as adult cases or those involving children).

### Following Criminal and Family

Criminal was the first division to start visitations several years ago. At present, the visitation team includes: Criminal Presiding Judge Elaine L. Davis of the Passaic Vicinage; Judge Albert J. Garofolo of the Atlantic-Cape May Vicinage; Judge B. Theodore

Bozonelis of the Morris-Sussex Vicinage; Joseph J. Barraco, assistant director of Criminal Practice, and John Chacko, Middlesex Vicinage Criminal Division manager.

The Family Division began its visitation program in January 2002 with team visits to Burlington, Morris and Sussex Counties. The Family visitation approach includes four teams, divided by docket type and geography. One team meets with and observes judges and reviews case processing of dissolution (divorce), domestic violence, and non-dissolution (support, custody and parental termination) cases. A separate team reviews juvenile and children-in-court case processing.

For purposes of visitation, Family divided the state into a northern and southern region to reduce the amount of time the volunteer judges and division managers spend on the process. Each team includes four judges, two managers and an AOC manager. The docket teams visit each county on separate days in the same month. After the visit, the vicinage receives a report from both teams concerning compliance with standards and the requirements of approved case processing manuals. (Middlesex and Monmouth are being scheduled for review as this newsletter goes to press.)

### A way to praise and to improve continuously

Visitation reports can be vehicles to praise and support the good work already taking place in vicinages. The following comments were taken from a report from a visitation conducted by another division:

“It was immediately apparent that (the county’s division) is well managed, extremely efficient and its structure was well defined. You...and your management staff deserve much praise.”

When problems are identified, the report offers suggestions to improve efficiency.

New Jersey has been in the vanguard of state Judiciaries which have started visitation programs to ensure quality, efficiency and consistency. Visitations in the Criminal Division began about 10 years ago; earlier this year, the Family Division became the second division to start visitation programs.



# Small Claims, Great Satisfaction

by Dave Bicofsky

This article by a satisfied New Jersey court customer appeared Feb. 6, 2002, in *The Record*, a daily newspaper with a weekday circulation of about 172,000. It is reproduced with permission of *The Record* of Hackensack, N.J.

THE FACTS WERE SIMPLE. I handed the keys to our 15-day-old car to the valet parking attendant, spent a few hours in the doctor's office with my wife, came out, and gave the young man the claim check. When he returned with the car, it had two gashes down the passenger's side. I yelled, called the Englewood Police Department to fill out a report, took pictures, and sent the above to the owner of the valet parking company seeking compensation. Instead, I received a brush-off. "We're not responsible... blah...blah... blah."

What to do? I called an attorney buddy who said it would cost as much or more to hire him as the \$950 body-shop repair charge. He told me to go to small claims court. It's easy, he said. No Bobby Donnell or Helen Gambles from "The Practice"... no Judge Judy, Judge Hackett, or "Texas Justice" with the attendant histrionics for the camera.

The State Division of Consumer Affairs says that "small claims court was created to promote convenient, prompt, effective, and inexpensive resolution of disputes at the grassroots level."

Just fill out a few papers, send a small (\$16) filing fee, and get your day in court. No muss... no fuss... no attorneys.

Well, either side can hire an attorney, but for most disputes it doesn't make economic sense. It didn't for me or, as it turned out, for my adversary.

I went to Hackensack to get the filing papers. But although the damage to my car occurred in Englewood, the valet parking company's office is in Essex County. So, on a sunny Tuesday morning, I left my home in Teaneck for downtown Newark.

I arrived around 8 a.m. at the Essex County Hall of Records, passed through security, found Room 307, and sat down. The clerk came in and said the room wouldn't open for business until 8:45 a.m. After two cups of coffee and a careful reading of *The Record* in the courthouse cafeteria (lots of guys and gals in solid dark suits... must be attorneys), I returned to the courtroom.

At 9:05 a.m., Judge Anthony J. Iuliani entered the courtroom, and the clerk began calling the cases. Tenant-landlord disputes. Bounced-check disputes.

Broken-contract disputes. Damaged-automobile disputes. The clerk intoned, "When your name is called, answer 'plaintiff' or 'defendant.'" Finally, "Bicofsky" ("plaintiff") vs. (name omitted) "defendant."

I turned around. He turned out to be one of the owners of the valet parking company. The judge told us to wait and a mediator would be assigned to help us reach agreement on a settlement. After 20 minutes, the mediator arrived and we went into a conference room.

She said she couldn't tell us what to do, but that the judge would not split the difference. He would decide either for one or the other. All or nothing. I knew my car had been damaged, but could I prove to a certainty that the valet parking attendant had done it? I said I'd settle for half. But the defendant wanted a trial. So back to the courtroom.

At 11:30 a.m., our case was called in front of a virtually empty courtroom. (Most cases had been settled quickly and quietly with the aid of mediators.) I took the stand, answered questions from the judge, had various papers and pictures entered into the record, withstood cross-examination from the defendant. He questioned his employee on the stand. I returned to the stand to get a few more points across. Then the judge said, "Gentlemen, I want you to go outside for five minutes and try to reach an agreement."

We did... and we did. Upon returning to the courtroom, I told the judge the deal was done. He exclaimed, "That's wonderful! Have a good day." The defendant and I shook hands and left. Three days later, a check for \$475 arrived in the mail. Case closed.

There are those elitists among us who denigrate small claims court as "meatball justice." Sorry. After my experience, it definitely was sirloin, if not filet mignon. It's pretty Solomonic in its own way. Simple facts... simple solutions... simple justice.

This truly is "The People's Court." (But not the television version.) Thanks, your honor. I hope you had a good day as well.

Dave Bicofsky is a former journalist who lives in Teaneck.

## Special Effects Make “Ordinary” Videos Extraordinary



By Bill Mecca  
Video Production Coordinator

Today's audience is very sophisticated when it comes to watching videos. Most of us have grown up watching professional television programs designed to engage and capture our attention.

It isn't good enough to just have something on the screen. It needs to be exciting, stimulating, entertaining. And yes, it can be both informative and entertaining.

Have you heard the old saying, “If a tree falls in a forest and there's no one there to hear it, did it make a sound?” Well, the same can be applied to video. If you make a video and no one watches it (or worse yet, no one who watched it *remembers* it), did it communicate? I don't think so.

In the winter edition of *Judiciary Times*, we talked about using the post-production process to make memorable videos. One of the techniques that can be incorporated in this last stage of the video production process is special effects. We all like special effects, but it's important to remember that special effects must serve the message you want to communicate and not exist simply to entertain or amuse. You may want to include the latest whiz-bang, fly-in logo that explodes into a rain of dogs and cats, but is it going to help you drive home your message? When your primary goal is

communication, every special effect must have a purpose.

Another area that bears watching is the temptation to make last-minute changes. Even the smallest change could result in tremendous delays and additional charges.

At the Judiciary, we use a computer-based editing system in which video images are recorded from tape to hard drive, allowing us to manipulate it like text in a word processing program. This gives us access to elaborate special effects that take time to set up and complete.

In a process called “rendering,” the computer must make



numerous mathematical calculations based on movement, color perspective, etc., and create a new file for each effect.

Rendering a full-screen graphic that is on the screen 12 seconds, with a special effect transition into and out of the graphic, can take upwards of 20 minutes to achieve. More complex effects can take additional hours. For example, some 30-second effects may take hours to render.

This is one more reason for following the procedure we have outlined in this series of columns. Making changes after effects have been rendered can undo many

hours of the editor's time and the computer's work as well. Change one thing in a complex special effect, and you have to re-render. A great deal of headache and lost time can be prevented by thinking through the final product *before* the final stages of post-production.

If all has gone according to plan and the requestor approves the final product, it's time to send the master copy out to be closed captioned to comply with the American with Disabilities Act, and then to move on to mass duplication. These costs are borne by the requesting office.

And that, in a nutshell, is the video production process, at least as it's played out in the Judiciary. Please send me an e-mail or call (609) 984-5409 if you have any questions, and always complete the video production request form when requesting services.

### Mediation Expansion

*Continued from page 6*

is right or wrong. Rather, its goal is to give the parties the opportunity to (1) vent and diffuse feelings, (2) clear up misunderstandings, (3) determine underlying interests or concerns, (4) find areas of agreement, and, ultimately, (5) incorporate these areas into solutions devised by the parties themselves. Some advantages of mediation include:

- the proceedings are confidential;
- the result may benefit both or all sides and thus present a “win-win” solution;
- the outcome can be tailored to meet the unique needs of the case and the particular parties.

## Richard Narcini Named Chief of Child Support Services

One day, he's the chief of the Judiciary unit responsible for purchases made for AOC business and accounting for how the money is spent.

The next day, he's the chief of the unit responsible for collections of support payments to hundreds of thousands of New Jersey children and accounting for how the money is distributed to help them meet their most basic needs.

"When you think about essential government services, this is about as essential as you can get!" noted Richard Narcini. "And it's a great feeling knowing that you are making a difference in people's lives," he said.

The new job may seem like a major shift in gears to those who think Narcini moved from a number-crunching office with an internal focus to one that is overwhelmingly customer oriented with an external focus, but the new chief doesn't see it that way. While Narcini's extensive experience in fiscal management

make him particularly well-suited for managing millions of dollars in support money, he says that purchasing and financial operations "has a lot more

Richard Narcini,  
Chief of Child  
Support Services



personal interaction than you'd think," requiring problem solving, negotiating and addressing many diverse situations.

"Whether the customers are Judiciary staff who need help, or parents and children who need help, providing accurate information and good service in a

Continued on page 13

## Workshop to Focus on Effective Training Techniques

Everyone knows that the classroom lecture is the best technique for training adults, right?

Wrong!

Experts in adult education have discovered that adults learn best in an *interactive* environment filled with stimulating activities and short, hands-on exer-

cises. In fact, there are many new techniques and "tricks of the trade" trainers can use to greatly increase learning and retention among adults.

If you are a staff trainer and want to learn these exciting new ways to increase learning, you'll want to sign up for a two-day trainer recognition event and workshop titled, *Adult Learning Theory*, sponsored by the Judiciary's Organizational Development and Training Unit.

Judiciary staff who assist with the delivery of training in the vicinages and in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) central offices are eligible to attend the program.

The two-day program will be offered at two different locations:

- ? May 20 and 21 in the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, Trenton, for AOC central offices staff;
- ? May 22 and 23 in the Robert Treat Hotel, Newark, for vicinage personnel.

"There are many different ways to learn," noted Steve Wilkins, chief of Organizational Development and Training. "This program will help trainers to identify their own learning style and to teach staff who learn in different ways. Our goal is to offer training that meets every learner's needs."

According to Organizational Development and Training, research shows that participants retain information at different rates depending on the instructor's teaching style. Learners retain...

- ? **90 percent** when they are involved in speaking and walking through exercises;
- ? **70 percent** when learning involves talking in class;
- ? **50 percent** when the instructor provides a demonstration as well as a lecture;
- ? **30 percent** when the instructor uses visual aids;
- ? **20 percent** when the instructor lectures;
- ? **10 percent** when the learners read (silently) in class.

## Rulings on Outside Employment for October and December 2001

*The Supreme Court Committee on Outside Activities of Judiciary Employees has issued a number of new opinions interpreting the Code of Conduct for Judiciary Employees. The following is a summary of these opinions issued in October and December 2001.*

**Municipal DCA may serve as part-time borough clerk**—A municipal deputy court administrator may perform part-time clerical work as a borough clerk for the same municipality outside of Judiciary employment hours where she would neither supervise nor be supervised by the same person at the two jobs. The predecessor as borough clerk had never been subpoenaed or appeared as a witness in court. Written consent from both the employee's Judiciary and municipal employers must be obtained.

**Party attendance approved**—Municipal court employees may attend a retirement party for clerks employed by the tax collector's office of the same municipality. The event in question was open and was not sponsored by the police or the municipality.

**Law clerk can review music**—A Superior Court judge's law clerk may be a free-lance critic/journalist for *Rockpile*, a small independent music publication since this activity does not constitute employment and is only an avocation. However, it is only permissible if the writing does not involve legal issues and does not reflect unfavorably on the Judiciary.

**Part-time grant writing approved**—A part-time municipal deputy court administrator may work part-time for the city administrator of the same municipality performing research and assisting with writing grant applications for the city in order to obtain state

grants. This work would not appear to compromise the independence of the Judiciary. It is permissible so long as the employee's Judiciary duties take precedence over the outside employment.

**Volunteering for crisis hotline**—A vicinage Human Resources Division administrative supervisor may work as a volunteer for a crisis intervention hotline answering the telephone and responding to callers. The hotline does not have a contract with the Judiciary and does not receive any court referrals. Neither the hotline staffers nor their records have ever been subpoenaed to testify in connection with litigation.

**OK to work for Community Action**—A probation officer in the Family Division, Child Support Unit, may work for Community Action for Independent Living, Inc., which provides residential, employment and case management services for adults who are mentally retarded and developmentally disabled, none of whom are court-involved.

**Volunteer, but don't raise funds**—A probation officer employed by the Family Division, Child Support Enforcement Unit, may work as a volunteer on an emergency squad to provide emergency medical treatment as long as he was not involved in fundraising activities and performed this activity outside of his Judiciary employment.

**Emergency response work approved**—A probation

officer employed by the Family Division, Child Support Enforcement Unit may work as a volunteer on a county emergency response team, as long as he was not involved in fundraising activities and performed this activity outside of his Judiciary work hours. The duties would involve the identification and containment of hazardous materials and it is unlikely that he would be called as a witness. If in the future this becomes a paid position, both his Judiciary and his county employer would have to give written consent to the dual employment.

**Out-of-state service**—A probation officer working in the intake unit may serve on a township planning commission out of the state on a volunteer basis. The commission advises locally elected officials on planning and community development matters. The outside activity is advisory in nature and consists of the collecting and analyzing of information and educating the community about the best choices for the community.

**Restrictions for part-time clerk**—A part-time municipal court violations clerk:

(1) May not work for the clerk's office for the same municipality as a part-time clerical employee, where her supervisor would be the borough clerk, who is also the court administrator, and who also supervises her in her municipal court job;

(2) May not work for the building department of the same



## Rulings on Outside Employment for October and December 2001

Continued from page 12

municipality as a part-time clerical employee, where her supervisor in that position, the building inspector, may appear in the municipal court where she is a part-time violations clerk; and

(3) May not continue to serve as an elected school board member of a neighboring municipality.

**“Yes” and “no” for vicinage interpreter**—A vicinage court interpreter and translator: (1) may freelance for municipal courts; (2) may not freelance for private individuals and law firms who have the potential of appearing in the same court.

**Interpreter can freelance upon resignation**—A Superior Court interpreter, upon resignation, may work as a freelance interpreter for another vicinage and for a municipal court. The one-year bar to engaging in official transactions with a former employee upon the former employee's termination of employment does not apply here.

**Can serve as alumni VP**—An attorney in the Municipal Court Services Division of the AOC may serve as vice president and reunion coordinator for a college's graduating class.

**Can't be flight attendant**—A law clerk, who had previously worked for American Airlines as a flight attendant, could not continue to be carried on the rolls of American Airlines as an employee, even though she would not fly during her clerkship. Being carried on the Airlines' rolls during her clerkship would constitute prohibited employment.

**Mall guard job must go**—A vicinage Judiciary employee in general operations may not be employed as a security guard at a mall because the responsibilities of employment as a security guard would include observing conduct which would require the employee's appearance in court as a witness.

**Work in two offices poses conflict**—A probate clerk in the surrogate's office may not be permitted to work in the county clerk's satellite office. This dual employment would conflict with the employee's full-time Judiciary employment.

**Hospital mental health counseling not allowed**—A Family Division probation officer may not work for the Capital Health System - Fuld Campus as a mental health counselor. This employment would create an appearance of impropriety in light of her duties as a Family Division probation officer in making referrals for mental health services.

**Can't transcribe for private agency**—A Superior Court judge's secretary, who is a certified transcriber, may not be employed by a private transcription agency to transcribe court tapes. A potential conflict existed with what she hears in the courts, as well as in interacting with attorneys for whom she would transcribe (on behalf of the private transcription agency), who could appear before her judge.

**Undersheriff event off limits**—It would be inappropriate for employees to attend a retirement event honoring an undersher-

iff. The event honors an active political figure and is customarily attended by politicians and others associated with county politics. The office of sheriff was up for election and hotly contested. The undersheriff is an appointed political position and the event was political.

### Richard Narcini

Continued from page 11

courteous, timely manner is the most important part of the job,” Narcini explained.

“In terms of the day-to-day operations, there's been a steep learning curve for me, but the Child Support Services staff has done an outstanding job of keeping things running while ‘showing me the ropes.’ And it's great to be able to work with Assistant Director Mary DeLeo in this important program. As I've heard on several occasions, we can learn from each other, work together and continue to improve services to New Jersey's children.”

Without question, Narcini will use his people skills as well as his penchant for numbers in his new role, as the child support unit works together with the state's Department of Human Services, federal programs and county welfare agencies on behalf of children in New Jersey.

## It's Not Too Early to Think About The Judiciary Statewide Holiday Party

The daffodils may just be coming up, but it's not too early to think about the Judiciary's annual *December* party for employees.

The holiday party is for *all* employees interested in investing a small part of their personal time with friends and colleagues from throughout the statewide court system.

In addition to sharing time with "familiar faces," the party offers an opportunity to meet the people behind the names we work with throughout the year.

If you have ideas or suggestions for this year's party, please send them to the Holiday Party Committee c/o Nanette Lind, Holiday Party Committee chair, via e-mail or through the mail at AOC, Civil Practice Division, P.O. Box 981, Trenton NJ 08625-0981.



**Seasonal Harmonies**—Members of the Holiday Party Choir provide an inspiring musical interlude during the Judiciary's annual December celebration. Shown are: Lisa Janowski, Nanette Lind, Marilyn Slivka, Suzen Witcher, Doris Hardin, Janis Alloway, Jack McCarthy, Mark Davies and Harvey Bailey. Also in the choir, but not visible in this picture, were Susan Gamble and Tom Farrell. Congratulations, choir, on a fine performance!

## Camden Staff Helps Needy during Holidays

Three senior probation officers and a Judiciary mail specialist volunteered and assisted the Salvation Army during the December holidays.

Officers Newton Murphy, Eric Schwartz and Peter A. Tortoreto, and Mark Wilson, a Judiciary Clerk 2, helped the needy by bagging more than 250 bags of groceries. The bags were distributed to underprivileged families in Camden and surrounding communities.

The employees were among many Judiciary employees who volunteered time, talents and resources to help the needy during the holiday season.

## The Judiciary Gets Its Technology in Ship-Shape

Continued from page 5

the IT Steering Committee, told the *Juice Press* in March.

This spring, the IT Steering Committee is sponsoring a survey, requesting your thoughts on which IT services are working and where efforts should be placed for improvements. These days we must run a tight ship due to limited funding, and choosing among all the worthwhile technology options is like trying to exercise portion control at the Midnight Buffet. This makes your survey response important. We need your feedback to make sure you get the services you need.

So, all hands on deck as we cruise forward! Be aware of how

new technology affects your work and make your thoughts known through the IT Steering Committee survey and the JUICE forum. And before you throw your PC

overboard, peruse the JUICE web page and the *Juice Press* for answers to your questions.

## Marlene Oiler Receives NALS Award

Continued from page 1

The late Assignment Judge Robert Guterl and the Hunterdon County Legal Secretaries Association nominated Oiler for the award.

A life member of NALS, Oiler served more than 33 years in the legal profession and is a past president of the Ohio and New Jersey chapters. In recommending her, the late Judge Guterl wrote,

"Marlene is an efficient and loyal worker, accepting challenges, and thriving on expanding roles and responsibilities while treating everyone with respect and diplomacy. She is respected among her peers and other court employees for her experience, knowledge and personal abilities."

A key component of customer service

## A Unified Judiciary Calls for Unified Publications

Publications play an important role in communicating with and serving the public.

Printed materials that have a unified image and follow the same quality standards for production convey a message of professionalism.

And it's not just a matter of appearances. Court customers and staff alike are more likely to respond appropriately and are less likely to make mistakes if information is presented to them clearly and simply.

A direct, simple and consistent approach is also important in the way we use words. It is essential that Judiciary staff use the same language to convey certain concepts. In the interest of clarity and

accuracy, Judiciary publications should follow the same editorial style (the *Associated Press Style Manual* is recommended for non-legal documents) and should reflect certain common principles of graphic design.

If your office or vicinage produces or plans to develop publications, please review the "Publications Guidelines" and "Newsletters Should and Shouldn't" documents on the InfoNet. These documents are in the Office of Public Affairs' section on Communications Services.

Communications Services staff also would be happy to provide additional information and meet with staff to provide input

and feedback into the publications development process.

For further information about communicating through publications, contact Linda Brown Holt, Office of Public Affairs, (609) 292-9580.

### Matrimonial Best Practices

Family Presiding Judge Charles M. Rand and Team Leader Jennifer Perez of the Camden Vicinage Family Division were featured in an article Nov. 5 in the *New Jersey Lawyer* for their participation in the Camden County Bar Association's seminar, "Matrimonial Best Practices Rules and Procedures Update." The seminar was held Oct. 3 in The Mansion in Voorhees.

## AOC Attorney Appointed Administrative Law Judge

Israel D. Dubin, an attorney with Professional Services in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) since 1988, was

confirmed as an administrative law judge effective Jan. 11. An administrative law judge conducts hearings to decide or to recom-

mend decisions on claims concerning government programs or other government-related matters.

While at the AOC, Dubin served as secretary and counsel to the Advisory Committee on Professional Ethics, the Committee on Attorney Advertising and the Committee on the Unauthorized Practice of Law, among other entities.

The Office of Administrative Law (OAL) advises executive-branch agencies on how to make rules and requires the agencies to follow statutorily prescribed steps in rulemaking. The OAL also conducts hearings and is responsible for publication of the *New Jersey Register* and the *New Jersey Administrative Code* to ensure that all interested parties have the opportunity to provide input into the rulemaking process.



**New ALJ Sworn In**—Retired Justice Daniel J. O'Hern swears in Israel Dubin as an Administrative Law Judge in January. Looking on are Carol Greenfield-Dubin, Israel's wife, and their three children, Jesse (holding the Bible), Jay and Naomi. (Photo by Bill Mecca)



## CDs Replace Paper Forms in Family Practice Thanks to Automated Forms Unit's Innovation

In a move to increase efficiency and save both time and money, the Automated Forms Unit of Trial Court Services' Programs and Procedures Division, in conjunction with the Family Division, has developed a user-friendly method that replaces Domestic Violence (DV) paper forms and the bound DV manual with electronic counterparts.

The solution was developed with part of an \$86,000 grant to revise DV forms that the Family Practice Division received under the Violence Against Women Act. As a result, Family Practice now provides inexpensive CDs instead of paper copies of temporary restraining orders (TROs) to prosecutors and law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

Automated Forms Unit staff members, Angela M. Watson and Steve Kalman, converted the word-processed TROs and domestic violence manual to .pdf format, said Patricia Shukis Fraser, assistant director of Trial Court Services and head of the Programs and Procedures Division. A form done as a .pdf will print out the same way on virtually any printer, ensuring that all forms look similar.

"The cost of postage alone would have used up the grant money if we had continued to send out paper copies of these documents," Shukis Fraser said.

More than 1,000 CDs were mailed to all law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement staff now can simply complete the TRO, print it out and copy it for distribution. In addition to the forms and manual, which has easy links to relevant statutes, the CDs also include Criminal Justice's Victim Notification Form and Training Manual.

"It is easy to use and run these programs, even for users who may not be proficient in 'computer-ese,'" said Harry Cassidy, acting assistant director of Family Practice. "The response from the law enforcement community has been overwhelmingly positive."

Happiest yet, he noted, is a certain Family Practice Division staff member who no longer has to lug heavy boxes filled with TROs and load them into cars!

**New Gloucester Court-house**--Gloucester County's new Family Court Facility opened Jan. 2 at 2 S. Broad St., Woodbury. The three-story building is home to Family Division judges and staff and includes five courtrooms, conference rooms, a victim-witness room, attorney workroom and waiting areas for litigants. The parking garage, directly behind the building, offers free parking to all.



### Mission Statement of the New Jersey Court System

*We are an independent branch of government constitutionally entrusted with the fair and just resolution of disputes in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and law.*